

California Libraries Sponsor Humanities Programs

Partnerships between state humanities councils and libraries are producing some of the most innovative and successful adult humanities programs across the country. The programs most frequently sponsored by large and small libraries alike are reading and discussion groups. In the past, libraries have often sponsored similar events such as "book talks" where the librarian introduces a book or leads a discussion. When the event is sponsored by a state humanities council such as CCH, however, an additional dimension can be added — a local scholar can be brought in to lead the discussion. The scholar's expertise lends depth to the discussion and often leads to additional reading and exploration by the members of the reading group. This may be a one-time-only event, but more often it is part of an ongoing series targeted toward a specific group of readers or organized around a special topic.

For example, last year CCH funded a series of lecture/discussion programs on the theme of "Sonoma County Generations" which was sponsored by the Sonoma County Library. Scholars from nearby Sonoma State University teamed up with local artists, authors, and architects to explore both the history and the quality of contemporary life in their county. The programs were organized around four themes: Utopian Generations, Familial Generations, Artistic Generations, and Literary Generations. An excerpt from the "Utopian Generations" program is included in this issue of *Humanities Network*.

A library-sponsored reading and discussion series on the American experience in the Vietnam War was sponsored by the Peninsula Library System in San Mateo County. This series of six two-hour programs was presented at two public libraries. Participants in "Talking about the Vietnam War" were provided with copies of books and articles that related to a special issue: the nature of the war, the experience of the war, the conduct of the war, the opposition to the war, and the impact/memory of the war. Each discussion group was led by a humanities scholar.

At the Pasadena Public Library, a CCH-sponsored project is currently offering a series of four reading and discussion programs for senior citizens. The seniors will discuss short stories by Ralph Ellison, Kurt Vonnegut, William Faulkner, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Entitled "Values in Transition" the aim of the series is not only to discuss the literary works but also to assess the impact of the series on the values and ideas of the seniors. For this purpose an evaluation session will be held and the comments and reflections made by the seniors will be videotaped. See the Calendar of Events in this issue for the dates and times of these programs.

Another library project, "New People/Shared Dreams: A Pilot Project on Hmong Acculturation in

the Central Valley," is sponsored by the Merced County Library. In this case the library program focuses on the current cultural phenomenon in Merced County — the recent influx of 12,000 Hmong immigrants. The adaptation to American life is so rapid for this population that it is possible that much of their history and cultural life could disappear in a single generation. The County Library, which is a resource and gathering place for many Hmong students and adults, is organizing a series of events exploring the history and cultural importance of Hmong music: an exhibit of Hmong musical instruments, a bilingual audiotape, a lecture on Hmong culture, and a bibliography of reading materials on the Hmong. The exhibit will open on November 1st and continue through the month at the Merced County Library. See the Calendar of Events in this issue for more information on the exhibit.

Special CCH Funding Category for Public Libraries

Each of these library-sponsored projects was funded through CCH's special grant category, "Humanities in Public Libraries." This category, which was initiated last year, is a joint effort by CCH and the California State Library to encourage library sponsorship of public humanities programs such as those described above. Application for funds in this category is limited to public libraries and library systems. We encourage any public library interested in submitting an application in this category to contact either the San Francisco or Los Angeles CCH office to discuss their proposal with staff.

Film and Discussion Programs

Libraries that do not have a special topic or specific audience in mind for a reading and discussion series might want to consider sponsoring a humanities Film and Speakers Program. CCH has compiled a directory of 18 humanities films produced in part with CCH funds that could form the basis for one or more public programs. The films are accompanied by a speaker knowledgeable about the themes or issues raised in the film.

These films are available for rental and screening by any organization. However, if the sponsoring organization is located in the Central Valley, it can apply to CCH for a special minigrant award of \$500 to help defray the costs of presenting the program. For further information about the Film & Speakers minigrant program contact Susan Gordon in the Los Angeles CCH office.

Directories that list the 18 humanities films as well as the list of speakers for each film are available on request from either CCH office.

Utopian Communities in Sonoma County

Editor's Note: The Sonoma County Library sponsored a series of lecture/discussions at libraries throughout the county on the theme of "Sonoma County Generations." Historical and contemporary perspectives of life in Sonoma County were discussed in four programs: "Utopian Generations," "Familial Generations," "Artistic Generations," and "Literary Generations." Local artists, authors, and architects joined scholars from Sonoma State University to share the fruits of their research and experience in local history, culture, literature, and philosophy with other members of the community.

The following excerpt is from the "Utopian Generations" program presented by Daniel Markwyn, Professor of History at Sonoma State University, and Gaye LeBaron, local columnist. Professor Markwyn's remarks addressed the notion of "utopia" in a general historical context and listed some of the characteristics of utopian thinking that account for the recent resurgence of the utopian impulse in California society. Ms. LeBaron then described and illustrated with slides four of the nineteenth century utopian communities that settled in Sonoma County. Her descriptions of two of these communities are included here.

MARKWYN: The word "utopia" is for most of us synonymous with "good place" or "the search for a good place." The roots of the "utopian propensity"—the effort to describe or construct a perfected society—are both religious and secular in Western culture. The Garden of Eden, that Judeo-Christian notion of a perfect place on earth, is one of the major contributors to the utopian tradition, and Plato's *Republic* is an example of the secular view of the ideal state on earth. The utopian propensity is not unique to Western culture. There is evidence in other cultures of this impulse, but it does seem to students of the subject that there are more utopias in Western culture than in other cultures.



The Commandery at Fountain Grove

Another way to look at the utopian tradition as developed in Western culture is in terms of a tension between two kingdoms—the kingdom of the spirit and the kingdom of the flesh. The efforts to resolve that tension are often expressed in utopian fantasies. Since the Renaissance, the utopian tradition has gained a great deal of force in our culture, and the literary genre has moved from a narrowly circumscribed kind of adventure story or fantasy story to a broader-based form that included political plans for improving mankind, for improving the state, and for achieving the good life.

In the eighteenth century, the period of Enlightenment, man and his reason were elevated to great heights. A confidence in man developed in the

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eighteenth century that had not been part of the Western intellectual and cultural scene for some time. The Enlightenment had a double-barreled effect on the utopian tradition. On one hand, it convinced many people that they could apply reason, reorder society and bring about directed social change. On the other hand, it antagonized those who felt this elevation of reason only served to separate man from nature, to make man the observer and no longer the participant. Certainly in our own time we have witnessed a number of utopian enterprises built on the latter theme: the rejection of the elevation of reason, science, and objectivity.

In the nineteenth century, the utopian tradition in this country was very much influenced by the development of the young republic. We are told that in the first half of the nineteenth century about 124 utopian experiments were undertaken in this country. Why? What was going on in America that might provoke this indulgence of the utopian propensity? The answers are fairly obvious. The commonly held view of the United States was that it was less tradition-bound than Europe, a place where experimentation was welcomed. It did not matter whether this was a realistic appraisal; it was what many people thought.

Both religious and secular communities were formed. Shaker communities prospered in the first part of the nineteenth century. Their belief system was certainly at variance with the dominant middle class views, but there was plenty of room and they were quiet folks. New Harmony, Indiana, is an example of the secular utopian impulse. New Harmony was founded by Robert Owen, a British manufacturer who believed that through certain social arrangements, society could improve itself in a way that would benefit all.

There are many other examples. The Oneida community in upstate New York, like some other utopian communities, was based on the notion of perfectionism. One way to move toward perfectionism—or to escape from sin or to return to Eden—was to rearrange the social order. The Oneida community was an expression of this perfectionist point of view, but its family practices and sexual arrangements attracted much unfavorable attention. I think it is fair to say, incidentally, that when enemies of a utopian enterprise wish to bring down that enterprise, they have only to point to the sexual practices, real or imagined, to suggest that there is something bizarre about this community. Usually those charges have the desired effect of breaking down utopian communities.

“Whether religious or secular, each utopian effort reveals a tension between the real and the ideal in Western culture.”

Utopian communities often suffered internal conflicts as well. The very openness of American society that fostered utopian experiments made it easier for the communities to break up, for disillusioned members could be reabsorbed in the larger society. We know of a number of instances where internal disagreements resulted either in splinter groups being formed or in the whole enterprise being abandoned.

As Robert Hine points out in his book, *California's Utopian Colonies*, after the gold rush which enlarged the population rather dramatically, a number of utopian communities appeared in California. What factors encouraged this shift of the utopian focus westward to California? Some utopians made their move on the basis of opportunity, land value, or other such

economic factors. But another important ingredient was the image of California as a special place.

One example of the poetic image of California in the late nineteenth century comes from a poem by Walt Whitman who, as I understand it, never visited California. The poem is called “Song of the Redwood-Tree.”

The fields of Nature long prepared and fallow,
the silent, cyclic chemistry,
The slow and steady ages plodding, the
unoccupied surface ripening, the rich ores
forming beneath;
At last the New arriving, assuming, taking
possession,
...
The new society at last, proportionate to
Nature,
In man of you, more than your mountain peaks
or stalwart trees imperial,
In woman more, far more, than all your gold or
vines, or even vital air.
Fresh come, to a new world indeed, yet long
prepared....

I am not suggesting that the reading of these lines made people move to California, but they do convey the positive image of California that was prevalent at the time.



The Fountain Grove winery

So we see that some of the conditions that had earlier applied to the country as a whole applied to California after the Gold Rush, and especially after the Civil War: the notion of openness, fertility, willingness to experiment. And not surprisingly, between 1850 and 1950 seventeen major religious or secular utopian communities appeared in California. And certainly after that, in the late 1960s and 1970s, the despair that people felt about the direction of American society contributed to the acceleration of the utopian impulse in California. The Free Speech Movement, the summer of love in 1967, the difficulties the American culture had in absorbing the large baby boom population all contributed to the resurgence in interest in utopian communities.

I would like to conclude by inviting you to think of California as a place where the utopian impulse has been expressed in our own time as well as in earlier times. This utopian impulse as expressed in American history and culture is best understood, I believe, as a consequence of intellectual playfulness, or of a desire for moral clarity often based upon a belief that society is in a bad way and in desperate need of change, that exaggeration may be necessary to achieve that change—thus, the blatant challenges to the larger society by some of the efforts in the sixties—and, most importantly, that the whole truth about social harmony can be known and realized.

Some of these beliefs and their consequences are present in those Sonoma County utopian societies soon to be discussed by Gaye LeBaron. There remain many ways to define the word “utopia” and to understand the “utopian propensity” in Western culture. In this overview of the “utopian impulse” I have tried to suggest that, whether religious or secular, each utopian effort does reveal a tension between the real and the ideal in Western culture.

“It seems that Sonoma County has had a high percentage of California's share of the utopian market—both in the 19th and 20th centuries.”

Two Utopian Communities

LEBARON: As I describe to you the simple facts about two of Sonoma County's nineteenth century utopian communities, you will see that each had some of the characteristics that Dr. Markwyn just talked about. There are more examples than the two I will speak about here. Indeed it seems that Sonoma County has had a high percentage of California's share of the utopian market—both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It may be because Sonoma County is such a nurturing place or it may be due to economic factors that so many groups decided to settle here.

Fountain Grove

In 1875 Fountain Grove was founded by a man named Thomas Lake Harris. Fountain Grove was intended to be the home center for Harris' community, The Brotherhood of the New Life. Harris was a very interesting man, very eclectic, unusually difficult to pin down. He obviously had a lot of personal charisma because he did achieve great success in getting people to follow him. In his young adulthood, he was a Calvinist, a Universalist minister, and finally a Swedenborgian. It was from his Swedenborgian connections that he developed the philosophy of the Brotherhood of the New Life. His theology was a mixture of Eastern mysticism, spiritualism, Christianity, social thought, and sexual symbolism.

Fountain Grove was for the inner circle, for those who presumably had achieved the gift of divine breath and could live in the inner circle next to the father. They were very carefully selected. At the peak of his career, Harris had about a thousand followers. There were about sixty at Fountain Grove at the height of the colony's population. The ones who were not at Fountain Grove were at his community in Brocton, New York.

Fountain Grove was located near the round barn north of Santa Rosa. When Thomas Lake Harris came here in 1875, he bought 700 acres, and he had 1500 acres by the time he left. In 1875 he built a house, a Georgian mansion that cost \$57,000, a tremendous amount for that time. The house had indoor plumbing and gas lighting, something which at that time was unknown and which the town of Santa Rosa took much note of.

In addition to his mansion, he built a three-story redwood building with open beams and arched doorways that sat on a knoll and looked back over the valley as a residence for the men of the community. He also built a two-story Victorian cottage for the women. Two other very important structures were the winery and a building for his printing press. Harris turned out fifty volumes of poetry, theology, and social thought.

In the late 1880s, Harris suffered a series of setbacks. He got some very bad press, first from a very highly publicized lawsuit by an English disciple named Laurence Oliphant who had given his family fortune, which was substantial, to the Brotherhood. Oliphant and his mother had followed Harris to Brocton, but had been excluded from Fountain Grove. Oliphant became less and less enchanted with Harris until finally he sued, claiming that it was his money that had bought Fountain Grove.

There were other disgruntled members of the community, people who gave the San Francisco papers in-

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SEPTEMBER GRANT AWARDS

Humanities in California Life

Chicano Poetry in California Language and Identity in a Twentieth Century Literature

Sponsor: Southwest Museum, Los Angeles
Project Director: Michael Heisley

Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds and
\$1,454 in matching funds if
\$2,908 in outside gifts
are raised

The purpose of this project is to examine the evolution of Chicano poetry in California over the past twenty-five years. The project's events include a one-day conference in March of 1989, a half-hour radio program, and a brief bibliography. The conference includes the perspectives of both scholars and poets as they explore the ways in which Chicano poets use language to establish individual and social identity.

The Grapes of Wrath, 1939-1989: An Interdisciplinary Forum

Sponsor: Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University

Project Director: Susan Shillinglaw

Amount of Award: \$4,850 in outright funds and
\$5,000 in matching funds if
\$10,000 in outside gifts
are raised

This two-day conference scheduled for March 16-18, 1989, will consider not only Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, but also the historical, artistic, and political context of the text as well as its relevance to the migrant situation today. Formats will include formal lectures, panels of scholars, exhibits, and films. Tours of Steinbeck's two Los Gatos houses where he wrote the novel will be given, and a bibliography of articles and reviews will be published.

Humanities for Californians

Nomads of Eurasia: An Exhibition from the Great Museums of the USSR

Sponsor: The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Project Director: Craig C. Black

Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds and
\$19,375 in matching funds if
\$38,750 in outside gifts
are raised

Co-organized with the Soviet Academy of Sciences, "Nomads of Eurasia" will present 1,200 artifacts from museums throughout the USSR to illustrate the history and cultural traditions of the nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppes and their contributions to world culture from 1,000 B.C. to the present. CCH funding will support the publication of interpretive essays as well as two public programs on themes of the exhibit: a three-day conference on "Ecology and Empire: Nomads in the Cultural Evolution of the Old World" and a one-day symposium on "The Guardian Spirit: Shamanism in the Old World and New." The exhibit opens on February 4, 1989 and will run through April 16. The conference and symposium are scheduled for February and March of 1989.

Symposium on Irish Women's Art and Poetry

Sponsor: Departments of Women's Studies and English, San Francisco State University

Project Directors: Chinosole and Bernadette O'Brien

Amount of Award: \$7,499 in outright funds

A five-day series of events that includes lectures, panels, readings, discussions, book and art exhibitions will be held in San Francisco, November 15-22. The lectures and discussions will examine the sociohistorical and religious background of Irish women and will explore how their experiences as women have contributed to their creative work. Presenters include scholars, artists, and poets from Ireland.

Humanities and Contemporary Issues

The Names Project Quilt

Sponsor: Telling Pictures, San Francisco

Project Director: Robert Epstein

Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds

The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is an enormous patchwork quilt designed and sewn by thousands of people from across the country. Each panel bears the name and a visual remembrance of someone who has died of AIDS. When the quilt was first unfolded in October 1987 in Washington, D.C., there were nearly 3,000 panels, covering 54,000 square feet. This project will develop a script for a film *The Names Quilt: A Patchwork of Lives*, a sixty-minute portrait of America coming to terms with AIDS which uses the Names Project Quilt as its central metaphor. The film will contain interviews with people who have lost someone to AIDS as well as interviews with scholars who reflect on the impact the Quilt has had on the American attitude toward disease and death; the relationship between disease, sexuality and public policy; and the role of the quilt as a cultural artifact and a symbol of community.



Capay Field. Photo from "The Great Central Valley Project" by Stephen Johnson.

To the Promised Land

Sponsor: California Historical Society, San Francisco

Project Director: Nathan Sumner

Amount of Award: \$8,025 in outright funds and
\$10,448 in matching funds if
\$20,897 in outside gifts
are raised

California has been, and continues to be, profoundly influenced by a steady influx of migrant populations. This project will examine the complex array of issues related to the history of migration and to the circumstances of undocumented workers in contemporary California. The project will include an exhibit of 79 documentary photographs with interpretive text and oral histories; public forums of humanities scholars addressing topics of migration and immigration; a program booklet in Spanish and English that includes 8-10 scholar essays; audio recordings of the public forums; and a publication of photographs from the exhibit with accompanying text. The exhibition will open in March 1989 at the San Jose Institute for Contemporary Art and will tour six additional sites through March 1990.

Dissemination of the Humanities

People of the Klamath: A Way of Life

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco

Project Director: James Culp

Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outside funds and
\$3,250 in matching funds if
\$6,500 in outside gifts
are raised

This half-hour documentary film will explore the way language and other elements of Native American culture are being preserved and enhanced within the Indian communities of northwestern California, especially within the Karuk Tribe located on the Klamath River. The film will show the history of the Indians' interactions with white people, their ceremonial and daily activities of the early 19th century, and the efforts being made today to teach the young people about their language and tribal history.

Research Preparation for "The Great Central Valley Project" Book

Sponsor: California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco

Project Director: Stephen Johnson

Amount of Award: \$5,000 in matching funds if
\$10,000 in outside gifts
are raised

Text and photographs from the successful "Great Central Valley" exhibit and symposium are being incorporated into a book to be published by the University of California Press. The text of the book will concentrate on the natural, social, and literary history of the Valley. The book will feature a selection of the historical and contemporary photographs from the exhibit presented together with the research and interpretive text generated for both the exhibit and the symposium. The book is scheduled for publication in spring of 1989.

The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region

Editor's Note: As part of the 1988 Public Humanities Conference, "Cultures in Transition," held in Fresno in May, the CCH-sponsored exhibit "The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region" opened at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum. A special highlight of the opening was a presentation by Sandy Lydon, history professor at Cabrillo College in Aptos, whose book Chinese Gold was the inspiration and chief resource for the exhibit. Ross McGuire, the director of the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, introduced Lydon and welcomed the exhibit which was on loan from the Santa Cruz City Museum.

Ross McGuire: This is one of the finest exhibits on California history that I have seen. You are drawn in, there is an atmosphere that is very hard to achieve in an essay or a monograph. It leads you from image to image; the use of words is balanced, and not lengthy. The usual way is if you can't fit it all on the walls of the exhibit, you can make up for it by writing a book. Sandy Lydon and the Santa Cruz City Museum did it the other way. The book came first and then the years of research were translated into a three-dimensional display. This is a wonderful model of a successful public program in the humanities and will help us as we in Fresno begin work on an exhibit to present the multi-cultural history of the San Joaquin Valley.

Sandy Lydon: The very first thing that I try to teach people when I take them to visit China is that the airplane is flying *west* from San Francisco, and they should not be saying they are going to the Far East. New Jersey is east from here. Californians have spent their entire history perched on the Pacific looking over their shoulder back at New York. As long as we retain that Euro-centric, East Coast-centric view, we are never going to see not only historical truth but also the incredible future that is before us. People think it is amazing that people from "out there" along the Pacific rim have flocked to California. Why is it amazing? If you are on the coast of California and look west, there is nothing but water.

Think about your notions of California history: there is Father Junipero Serra who's got a bad leg but works his way up north from Baja. The Spaniards are starving to death and eating their mules and fighting their way up north to found the California Missions. And



Photo from "The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region" exhibit (courtesy of the Santa Cruz City Museum)

you visit the Spanish missions and say, "Right, the Spanish were here." But if I took you to a Chinese family cemetery, you'd say, "How amazing." Turn it around. That the Spanish were here is amazing. The geographical distance and what they had to do to get here makes it amazing.

What's happening in California right now in terms of immigration and cultures in transition is a continuation of a historical event that in my view probably goes back to the 5th and 6th century. It is natural that Asians and Pacific Islanders would come to this coast. It is much less natural that Europeans found their way to these shores.

"It is natural that Asians and Pacific Islanders would come to this coast. It is much less natural that Europeans found their way to these shores."

One of the things I try to do in my work is to help people see things they take for granted. That's what immigrants do. Immigrants bring vision. But in the process of trying to explain to people what they take for granted I begin to realize that we have lost the vision to see what's possible. What immigrants bring to America is the ability to see things where we see nothing. I will give you an example.

There was a Chinese gentleman who lived in San Juan Bautista, and he made his living poisoning ground squirrels. Ground squirrels are a problem in an agricultural area as you may know. They eat things and people don't eat them so they multiply. Now, for some reason, the Europeans brought mustard seed to California. We don't know why but they did. It was considered a weed. Cows don't eat it, and in the spring it grows 10 to 15 feet high, a nuisance for the farmer. Poison Jim went to one of the local farmers and said, "I'd like to cut this mustard down for you and take the seed so it won't come back next year." The farmer was delighted, and Poison Jim and his Chinese crew from San Francisco



An herbalist shop is reconstructed as part of "The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region" exhibit

"What's happening in California right now in terms of immigration and cultures in transition is a continuation of a historical event that in my view probably goes back to the 5th and 6th Century."

spent a couple of months cutting down all the mustard they could find. He put the bags of seed in a storehouse in San Juan and waited. Later that year, the international mustard crop failed. A French mustard broker came to San Francisco, heard of Poison Jim's storehouse and immediately went off to San Juan. Poison Jim subsequently negotiated for the amount of \$30,000 for the crop in the warehouse. He became instantly rich, and the farmer who had given it to him sat bolt upright in bed and said, "Those aren't weeds. That's a crop." Within five years they were planting mustard in the Salinas Valley, and by the 1880s it was one of the major commercial crops in central California.

That's what the Chinese brought here. That's what all immigrants bring here. They see things differently. There are no commodities that can't be used. The title of my book is *Chinese Gold*, and the reason I gave it that title is because what the Chinese did is to turn things that other people discarded into something of value.

Looking at a map of the Pacific Rim, you need to know there is a current that carried Chinese mariners from China to California. I'm convinced this happened in the 5th or 6th century. There is a submarine trench that comes right into Carmel Bay, the richest repository of marine life in the Pacific Ocean. In 1851 Chinese junks landed in this cove which is known as Pebble Beach today. They came as immigrants with families and livestock on board their oceangoing junks. They built a fishing village right here at Pebble Beach about 1856. It was the largest fishing village in central California — 300 buildings, several hundred occupants. Families were here. It had the largest percentage of women to men anywhere in California. They were not sojourners. They intended to stay. They were immigrants.

What did the Chinese do when they came here? Let me give you a couple of examples. They harvested abalone. In 1856 no one was harvesting abalone and there was a lot of abalone because the fur traders had eliminated all the otters. There was abalone all over the rocks. Meanwhile, a quarter of a century earlier Spaniards were starving to death along the coast while they waited for supply ships. The Chinese knew what was edible. The Spaniards needed meat and beans, but the Chinese just waited for the tide to go out and gathered up the abalone. They made pry bars out of whale bone to pop them open. Then they dried them and shipped them back to China and to San Francisco and other places. The point is that they made use of something that no one else wanted. They then took the abalone shells and polished them and sold them to tourists — the first souvenir stand in Monterey history.

They built all our railroads. They drilled two and a half miles of tunnel through the Santa Cruz mountains at enormous loss of life. Over 100 miles of track were laid in the Monterey Bay region and over 100 Chinese deaths were recorded. There is a phrase in our tradition that comes from that — Chinaman's chance. Not much of a chance at all.

They were also a major farm labor force in central California. Fishermen, farmers, builders of railroads. We don't have a lot of plaques for the Chinese contribution. But there are monuments, subtle monuments.

Utopian Communities

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formation which was scurrilous about Harris. It is interesting in reading these articles that no one ever said specifically what he did wrong. It was mostly all innuendo, with hints of strange sexual practices.

Finally in 1881, a woman named Alzire Chevaillier came from Boston to learn the gift of the breath, and when she left, she went to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and wrote a series of articles in which she denounced Harris for his sexual practices as well as his teachings. Harris left Santa Rosa within a week after Chevaillier left. He died in New York in 1906, and he left the Fountain Grove ranch to his followers with the rights of survivorship. So Fountain Grove was from 1875 to 1934, to some extent, the property of the Brotherhood of New Life or its survivors.

Icaria Speranza

Icaria Speranza was the last of a series of communes that were founded by the followers of the French socialist philosopher, Etienne Cabet, whose novel, *Voyage en Icarie*, had captured the imagination of mid-nineteenth-century revolutionary France. This Cloverdale community was the end of a trail that led from France to Texas to Illinois (the community abandoned by the Mormons when they came to Salt Lake) to Iowa and finally to California in the Russian River Valley. The failures of the previous communities meant that when this French-speaking group led by Jules Leroux and his son Armand Dehay landed in Cloverdale in 1881, they had a couple of strikes against them already in terms of making a successful community. They had suffered the effects of ideological splinter groups and also had incurred a lot of debts. The fifty-five people who came to Sonoma County were lured here by the prospect of growing wine grapes..



Icaria Speranza homes in Cloverdale

Icaria was located on 885 acres, three miles south of Cloverdale. Each Icarian family built their own small house. They were grouped around a two-story central building with a big white veranda which was the community building. Despite the fact that the Icarians had an edict against alcohol, they made wine and brandy. They grew wheat, sold peaches and prunes in a cooperative store in Cloverdale, and earned respect from their neighbors for their industry.

The Icarian community lasted five years or more. One of the reasons for their failure to thrive was their demand that members be fluent in French, which was not common in this part of California in the 1880s. Secondly they had debts to pay from the previous colony, and they had overestimated the productivity of their land. They found they could not support their entire community, and in 1886 the group failed financially. Those who tried to stay divided the land and until about ten years ago, there was a Dehay descendant living near the Icarian land. Some of those who moved to San Francisco founded the French Hospital which is still in operation there.

“Black Angelenos” Exhibit Continues in Los Angeles

During the 1880s, pre-World War I and in the 1940s, the belief that a healthier racial climate existed in California stimulated waves of migration of Blacks to the state, especially from the South. The exhibit, “Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950,” at the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles, takes a look at the everyday lives of these people through photographs, business documents, clothing, pamphlets and other artifacts. The exhibit also presents a re-creation of four sites: the Henry Owens home with Biddy Mason on the porch; a 1940s church complete with stained glass window; the Dunbar Hotel (a symbol of Black enterprise on Central Avenue); and a World War II “GI Bill” era house.

Curator of History, Lonnie G. Bunch III says the exhibit highlights the fact that Los Angeles is the most diverse Black community in America: “No other place had such a diversity as early and in as large a number.”

The Founding of Los Angeles: On September 4, 1781, forty-four *pobladores* or settlers established the pueblo of Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula. Twenty-six of the *pobladores* were either Black or of mixed ancestry. They came from the city of Rosario in Sinaloa, Mexico, where two-thirds of the residents were mulattoes. Although overlooked by many researchers, these *pobladores* created the foundation of the city of Los Angeles.

The Afro-Mexican Presence: Prior to the Americanization of Mexican California that began with statehood in 1850, a small but significant group of Afro-Mexicans were present in Los Angeles. These rancheros owned many acres of what is now Los Angeles County including areas near Simi, the San Fernando Valley, the eastern San Gabriel Valley and the Rancho Rodeo de Aquas--today known as Beverly Hills. Pio Pico, the grandson of a mulatto, was a large land-owner and served as the last Mexican governor of California.

The Evolution of the Nineteenth Century Community: Gold and statehood increased the Anglo-American population and brought laws that discriminated against the Black Angelenos. Yet this era produced Robert Owens, a shrewd real estate investor, and Biddy Mason, a former slave who became the spiritual and economic central figure in the Black community until her death in 1891.

The Golden Era of Black Los Angeles: From 1890 into the 1920s the Afro-American experienced a Golden Era in Los Angeles. The size and status of the Black population increased dramatically, giving the community unprecedented economic and political influence. The lure of Los Angeles as a “good town for Negroes”



The rise of restricted housing in Los Angeles did much to tarnish the dream of equal opportunity. A prime example was this housing tract built immediately after World War II. (Courtesy of Southern California Library for Social Studies & Research)

touched every corner of the country, encouraging hundreds and later thousands to move to Los Angeles. Groups, newspapers, and individuals all sought to ensure that the fight against racism in the city was a collective struggle rather than an individual battle. The fruit of this collaborative effort was the election of Frederick Roberts to the California Legislature in 1918.

The Age of Central Avenue: The story of Central Avenue with its elegant neighborhoods, jazz clubs, and business districts has grown to mythic proportions. Some remember “the Avenue” as a miniature Harlem where musicians and literati gauged the community’s pulse by day and transformed that energy into rhyme and music by night. Others recall the stores and offices of Black professionals and the fabled Dunbar Hotel, the jewel of Central Avenue. Ironically, at the moment when Central Avenue was at its best, an economic downturn and restricted housing covenants would soon turn the area into an overcrowded slum.

Depression, War and Peace: The Great Depression and the ensuing World War sparked a migration that forever changed the landscape of Southern California. By 1945 the number of Black Angelenos more than tripled from the 38,844 who resided in the city in 1930. This increase led to overcrowding, friction and violence between the races. The lack of employment opportunities during the Depression spurred the fight for equal opportunity. The War brought an end to the Depression, yet Black Los Angeles had to fight in the courts in order to obtain a fair share of war industry jobs. The War’s conclusion did not end the discrimination faced by the Black Angeleno, but it did spark a burgeoning Black middle class drawn by economic opportunities, inexpensive real estate and the weather—the California Dream.



The graduating class of 1918 of the School of Dentistry at USC. Mrs. Vada Somerville (upper right corner), the first Black woman to graduate from USC, was a guiding force among Black Angelenos for almost fifty years. (Courtesy of Doris Howard)

Robert Bellah Will Deliver CCH Public Humanities Lecture

The 1989 Public Humanities Conference sponsored by CCH will be held in Fullerton next June. Robert Bellah, Ford Professor of Comparative Studies, Department of Sociology, UC Berkeley and author of *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, will deliver the Public Humanities Lecture on Friday, June 2, on the CSU Fullerton campus. As with past conferences, a meeting will be held on the following day, Saturday, June 3, in order to meet with members of the public interested in humanities programming for adult audiences. This "evaluation session" is an opportunity for CCH staff and Council members to receive input and feedback about CCH programs and policies.

As part of the Public Humanities Conference, a series of locally-sponsored public humanities events will take place at several sites in Orange County. Details of all the Public Humanities Conference activities will be included in the next issue of Humanities Network. We hope to see you in Fullerton.

Funds for NEH State Programs Are Increased

On September 27 President Reagan signed into law the Fiscal Year 1989 Interior Appropriations bill which includes funds for the National Endowment for the Humanities. The \$25 million allotted to the state programs represents a 17.4 percent increase over the FY 1988 total of \$21.3 million. This will result in an increase of \$72,540 in CCH grant funds over last year, and an increase of \$15,000 in CCH matching funds.

CCH Welcomes Two New Members

In August, Governor Deukmejian appointed two new members to the California Council for the Humanities. We are pleased to welcome Lily Cuneo of San Francisco and Christine Vu-Dinh of Santa Ana. Ms. Cuneo has been active in community organizations and events in San Francisco for many years. Ms. Vu-Dinh received a Master's Degree in Mass Communications at San Diego State University in 1976 and her law degree from Western State University in 1985. She speaks Vietnamese, French, Spanish and English fluently and has been involved in many Vietnamese-American community activities in addition to practicing law since 1985.

Both Ms. Cuneo and Ms. Vu-Dinh will serve four-year terms on the Council. We look forward to working with them.



Governor Deukmejian appointed San Francisco civic leader Lily Cuneo and Santa Ana attorney Christine Vu-Dinh to the Council.

CCH Seeks Input on Program and Policies

In thirteen years of grantmaking, CCH has awarded more than eight million dollars to over 1000 projects in an effort to bring the insights of history, literature, philosophy, and related disciplines to the citizens of California. We need your input and feedback in order to know if our program meets the needs of people from the various geographical, ethnic, and professional constituencies through the state.

Once a year at our annual Public Humanities Conference, such as the one to be held in Fullerton in June of next year, CCH staff and Council members meet with members of the public who are interested in providing quality public humanities programs for the adult out-of-school audience. The location of the Public Humanities Conference changes each year so we can meet with people in different geographical areas of this large state.

We also welcome your written comments and suggestions. Send your letters to Jim Quay, Executive Director, CCH, 312 Sutter St., Suite 601, San Francisco, 94108. If you would like to know more about the Council's activities, please request a CCH Program Description. This four-page summary describes the goals, budget, grants program, and proposed directions for CCH.

Walker Percy Will Deliver 18th Jefferson Lecture

American novelist Walker Percy has been selected by the National Council on the Humanities to deliver the eighteenth Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities. The lecture will be presented on May 3, 1989 in Washington, D.C. In announcing Percy's selection, NEH Chairman Lynne Cheney called Percy "one of America's finest contemporary novelists. His works are important not only for their outstanding literary merit but for their ethical and philosophical dimensions." Percy's first novel, *The Moviegoer*, was published in 1961 and received the National Book Award the following year. Other works include *Love in the Ruins* (1971), winner of the National Catholic Book Award; *The Second Coming* (1980); *Lost in the Cosmos* (1983); and *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987). Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Percy currently resides in Covington, Louisiana, near New Orleans.

CCH Member Receives Media Fellowship

CCH member Loni Ding is among the recipients of fellowships awarded by the California Arts Council for 1987-88. Forty individual artists were selected from 549 applicants for the \$5,000 awards that were made this year in the categories of media, new genre, and screenwriting. The fellowships for 1988-89 will be in the literature category.

Awards were made on the basis of artistic quality, uniqueness of vision, professional growth and experience, dedication, and the likelihood of making continued contributions to the arts discipline.



NEH Chairman Issues Report on "Humanities in America"

According to a recently released report by NEH Chairman, Lynne Cheney, the humanities are not only alive but flourishing at the popular level in this country. In her Congressionally-mandated report, "Humanities in America," Cheney states that Americans are spending more money on cultural events than on sports events. She also notes that "25 million people a year participate in programs sponsored by state humanities councils, organizations that since 1971 have encouraged learning in such disciplines as history, literature, and philosophy."

While commending the increase in support for the humanities in the public sphere, however, she laments the state of the academic pursuit of the humanities in our colleges and universities, noting that in 1965-66 one of every six college students was majoring in the humanities and in 1985-86, the figure was one in sixteen. Part of this shift may be due to the fact that today's college students have a strong vocational orientation, and they are attracted to courses that promise "direct vocational benefit." It is unfortunate, however, that this direction is so strongly reinforced by the lack of college requirements for humanities courses.

According to the findings of an unpublished NEH survey, students can graduate from almost 80 percent of the nation's four-year colleges and universities without taking a course in the history of Western civilization, and from more than 80 percent of these institutions without taking a course in American history.

To help prepare the report, Ms. Cheney convened three advisory groups of scholars, administrators, and others with ties to the humanities to discuss the topics covered in the report: "The Scholar and Society," "The Word and the Image," and "The Public and the Humanities."

Single copies of the report are available free from the Office of Publications and Public Affairs, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington 20506.

Congress Declares National Humanities Week

Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island and Representative Sidney Yates of Illinois have introduced resolutions in the Congress to name the week of December 4 through 10 as "National Humanities Week". Pell stated that "such a proclamation by the U.S. Congress will help focus our attention on the very central place that the humanities occupy in our society." He went on to say that while "the humanities may not solve all of the mounting practical problems that confront us daily in our modern existence, they are certainly a key element in the development of mature and educated persons." The humanities are, according to Pell, "a measure of the values and aspirations of society and they reveal the quality of our common life."

Mythology Institute for Elementary Teachers

A Humanities Institute for elementary teachers, "Myth and its Transformations: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*", funded by NEH, will be held at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, July 10-August 4, 1989. Forty K-6 teachers will participate in a program that focuses on four themes: the nature of mythology; the Greek tradition of myth; the classical tradition of myth; mythology in the curriculum. Participants will receive six hours of graduate credit, room and board, transportation costs, and a \$1000 stipend. For an application, contact Robert M. Wilhelm, Director, The Mythology Institute, Department of Classics, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056; 514/529-3991.

CALENDAR OF HUMANITIES EVENTS

Exhibits

October 16

“Passing Farms: Enduring Values, Phase III” is a permanent exhibit opening today which focuses on the historical overview of the family farm in Santa Clara County, at the Stevens Ranch Fruit Barn, San Jose Historical Museum, 635 Phelan Avenue, San Jose. 408/277-4018.

through October 31

“The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region Exhibit” is at Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum, King City. Please contact the Visitors Bureau at 408/385-1484 for detailed information.

through November 30

“New People/Shared Dreams: A Pilot Project of Hmong Acculturation in the Central Valley” is an exhibit of Hmong musical material culture opening on November 1st at Merced County Library. 209/385-7484

through January 1989

“‘Oakland’s Firsts’: Black Pioneers and Institutions,” is a photo exhibit continuing at East Bay Historical Society, 5606 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, Tues. - Fri.: 12:30 pm to 5:30 pm. 415/658-3158

through March 1989

“Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950” is an exhibit continuing at the California Afro-American Museum, 600 State Dr., Exposition Park, Los Angeles. For more information, please call the museum at 213/744-7432.

Events

October 19-23

“Women of the Americas Film and Video Festival” will be held at the York Theatre and The Mission Cultural Center in San Francisco. The agenda for the festival may be obtained by calling Cine Accion at 415/553-8135.

October 20-22

“Women of the Americas Film and Video festival” will also be presented at University of California, Berkeley, and La Pena Cultural Center, Berkeley. Please call Cine Accion at 415/553-8135 for more detailed information.

October 21-22

“The Fabric of Our Lives: An American Textile Heritage” is a symposium about quilts, weavings and other handcrafted textiles. A reception will be held on Friday, October 21. Saturday’s session begins at 9:30 am and ends with films by Pat Ferrero at Mendocino College Campus, 8 pm. 707/462-1160.

October 23

“Taking Refuge in Los Angeles: Life in a Vietnamese Buddhist Temple” is sponsoring a cultural program and tea for the Laotian community at Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 1555 Van Ness Avenue, 3-4 pm. 209/441-1444.

October 25

“Values in Transition” will continue the reading and discussion program for senior citizens at the scheduled library branch locations in Pasadena, 9:30 am to 11 am. 818/405-4607.

November 1

“Religion, Science and Technology: The Next Generation” presents two lectures today entitled “Playing God? Theological and Philosophical Perspectives on Genetic Engineering” at Wesley United Methodist Church, Wesley Hall, Fresno, at 7:30 pm and “Unusual Ethics of Reproductive Genetics Counseling, Pre-Natal Diagnosis and Human Gene Therapy,” at California State University, Room 200, Fresno, at 12 noon. 209/222-3796.

November 8

“Values in Transition” continues the reading and discussion program at the scheduled library branch locations in Pasadena 9:30am - 11 am. 818/405-4607.

November 15

“Values in Transition” presents the final reading and discussion program for senior citizens at Pasadena Central Library, Wright Auditorium, 9:30 am - 11:30 am. 818/405-4607.

November 15

“An Examination of Music in the Lives of the Hmong in Merced County” at Merced County Library, Gracey Room, 2100 “O” Street, Merced, at 7 pm. The keynote speaker is David Roche, ethnomusicologist. 209/385-7484.

November 17

“Symposium on Irish Women’s Art and Poetry” opening reception will take place at San Francisco State University Club, 3:30 pm - 6 pm. Please call the Women’s Studies Department, S.F.S.U., at 415/338-1388 to confirm details.

November 18

“Symposium on Irish Women’s Art and Poetry” continues with Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill presenting a lecture entitled “Irish Women Poets” at the Humanities Building, S.F.S.U., 12 noon - 2 pm. Also, Nell McCafferty is presenting a lecture on “Women in Ireland” at the Woman’s Building in San Francisco, 7:00 pm. 415/338-1388.

November 19

“Symposium on Irish Women’s Art and Poetry” continues with a lecture and poetry reading by Joan Keefe at San Francisco State University at 11 am. The lecture, “Emerging Images in Irish Women’s Poetry” and poetry reading will be given at S.F.S.U. at 2 pm. 415/338-1388.

November 20

“Symposium on Irish Women’s Art and Poetry” presents a lecture entitled “Contemporary Irish Women Artists” at the Fire Station, Fort Mason, S.F., at 12 noon. The keynote speaker is Fiona Barber. 415/338-1388.

November 20

“Taking Refuge in Los Angeles: Life in Vietnamese Buddhist Temple” is presenting a lecture/presentation on Buddhism in Fresno, 2 pm - 4 pm. The keynote speakers are Ann Berliner, CSU, Fresno, Philosophy Department and Rev. Hozan Hardiman, Fresno Buddhist Temple. Please call 209/441-1444 to confirm details.

November 21

“Symposium on Irish Women’s Art and Poetry” returns to S.F.S.U. with a lecture on “How Irish Women’s Literature Can Be Considered Part of a Liberation Movement” given by Ailbhe Smyth, 4 pm - 7 pm. 415/338-1388.

November 22

“Symposium on Irish Women’s Art and Poetry” continues with Alice Maher presenting a lecture entitled “The Woman Artist and the Creative Process” at S.F.S.U., 9:35 am - 10:50 am. 415/338-1388.

**CALIFORNIA
COUNCIL
FOR THE
HUMANITIES**

312 Sutter Street
Suite 601
San Francisco, CA 94108
415/391-1474

315 W. Ninth Street
Suite 1103
Los Angeles, CA 90015
213/623-5993

MORTON ROTHSTEIN, Chair
Professor of History, UC Davis
ALBERT CAMARILLO
Professor of History
Stanford University, Stanford
LILY CUNEO
Civic Leader
San Francisco

LONI DING
President, Vox Productions, Inc., San Francisco

KATHRYN GAEDDERT
History Center Administrator
Sacramento History Center

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Professor of Philosophy
California State University, Los Angeles

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Professor of English
University of the Pacific, Stockton

HELEN HERNANDEZ
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UCLA

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Dean, School of Social Sciences
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NEXT PROPOSAL DEADLINE: April 1, 1989

Proposals for this deadline must conform to the 1988 Program Announcement. Send 10 copies of all proposals (14 copies of media proposals) to the San Francisco office by the due date.

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CCH-Sponsored Exhibit Continues in Los Angeles

**"Black Angelenos" Exhibit
Documents 100 Years of Los Angeles
Black History**



Two young boys visit the Cawston Ostrich Farm in South Pasadena. (Courtesy of the family of Lawrence Farrow)



The struggle for racial equality gathered support during World War II. Here protesters picket businesses that did not hire Blacks. (Courtesy of Vera Jackson)



A Sunday afternoon gathering in front of First A.M.E. Church at 8th and Towne Streets in 1918. (Courtesy of Jane Taylor)

Photographs are from the "Black Angelenos" exhibit at the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles. The exhibit continues through March of 1989.

The California Council for the Humanities is a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities